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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Easthampton Fire Department Assisting School Nurses with COVID-19 Testing**

**Easthampton, MA** - Given the projected peak of the omicron variant over the next few weeks, Superintendent Dr. Allison LeClair and Fire Chief Christopher Norris have partnered to bolster testing efforts in the Easthampton public schools. Firefighter/paramedics are now assisting school nurses with COVID-19 testing and triaging of the student population.

Since the start of the school year, the school nurses have been working tirelessly and diligently to ensure the highest level of safety for the students and staff. The daily testing and processing quickly reached capacity limits on nurses and limited resources. Beginning this week, Easthampton firefighters and paramedics will work alongside school nurses and staff to administer and process COVID-19 testing.

“At this critical time during the pandemic, the Easthampton Fire Department knows the constraints and challenges that COVID-19 has placed on the limited school healthcare personnel. We have partnered with the nurses during many of the vaccine clinics. The Fire Department is happy to continue this relationship with COVID testing to ensure the highest level of safety for students, staff, and community,” said Fire Chief Christopher Norris.

Other public school districts have similar arrangements and partnerships across the state in attempts to reduce transmission. The Holyoke Public School District recently joined efforts with a private ambulance service to provide similar services. This testing is expected to continue over the next few weeks.

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